



**Borough of Portland Council Special Meeting Minutes
December 8, 2025**

On December 8, 2025, at 7:00 PM, the Borough Council of the Borough of Portland, Northampton County, Pennsylvania, met for a special meeting at the Portland Borough Municipal Building, 206 Division Street, Portland, Pennsylvania.

Call to Order – President Lance Prator called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Roll Call – Council Members: Lance Prator, President, Stephanie Steele, Bruce Cialfi, Susan Ivancich, Karen Pfeiffer and Lisa Prator were present. Mayor Heather Fischer and Patrick McHugh were absent.

Others Present –Borough Secretary/Treasurer-Lori Sliker were present. Also, present-, Borough Engineer-Mark Bahnick, Craig LaBarre, Fire Chief James Potter and Ryan McGowan-First Fidelity. Borough Solicitor-Michael Gaul was absent.

Announcement of Recording – President Prator announced that the meeting was being digitally recorded for assistance in preparation of the minutes; and asked whether anyone else, besides the Borough Secretary was recording the meeting. No one is recording tonight's meeting.

Editor's note: Recording of the meeting by Mayor Heather Fischer, Borough Council members or members of the public are for personal use only, and do not constitute official Borough action, or an official record, unless expressly authorized by specific Borough Council action.

Approval of the Meeting Agenda and any Amendments:

President Prator asked if there were any amendments to the agenda.

A motion was made by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer to approve December 8, 2025, agenda as presented, seconded by Councilmember Lisa Prator. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.

Action on the Meeting Minutes: None

Public Comment:

Borough Engineer's Report: Mark Bahnick, Van Cleef

Lamtec Transmittal letter, Certification Statement, Checklist – President Prator advised that Lamtec documents require the secretary's signature.

A motion was made by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer to authorize the secretary to sign the Lamtec Transmittal letter, checklist, and certification statement, seconded by Councilmember Stephanie Steele. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.

Resolution #2025-19: Resolution for Plan Revision for New Land Development. Mr. Bahnick advised that the Resolution #2025-19 Planning Module is ready to be sent to DEP for comment.

A motion was made by Councilmember Stephanie Steele to adopt Resolution #2025-19: Resolution for Plan Revision for New Land Development, seconded by Councilmember Bruce Cialfi. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.

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Sewer Committee:

Commercial industrial customers – no update.

Proposed Borough and township Intermunicipal Agreement on Sewer Service- no update

Effluent Line – Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised that a video conference call was held with herself, DEP, Clean Water Program, VanCleeef Engineering, President Prator and Craig LaBarre to discuss the proposed repairs of the Effluent Line. During the call she asked if the grass swale was a permanent or temporary repair; Amy Bellanca-Clean Water Program Manager advised that this is considered a temporary repair. After reviewing some pictures Ms. Bellanca followed up with a formal letter which was received by the Borough stating the work done now is sufficient to get through to Spring. For this repair to be considered a permanent repair it would need to be a non-permeable solution, so the water does not sit and soak into the ground. Mr. Bahnick provided council with an example of a liner that would create a non-permeable surface. Councilmember Stephanie Steele stated that when Craig LaBarre, Michael Sullivan, Tyler Evans and herself met they discussed a direct discharge closer to the #9 manhole; that was not the plan presented at the last meeting. During the call Ms. Bellanca was asked if the work they have completed so far would be sufficient to hold additional work off until April. Ms. Bellanca advised yes, the work could wait until spring. Councilmember Lisa Prator stated the Borough does not have a high revenue tax base and permanent repair is preferred; she also advised she applied for a mini grant for \$5,000.00 to help with the cost of the repairs. Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer asked if the blocked pipe could be dug up and replaced or could the pipe be unclogged. Mr. LaBarre explained that it was designed and constructed to discharge through a pipe that runs under the riverbed and discharges into the river. Debris from the river has been hitting the pipe for years and the pipe broke off; the riverbed would be extremely costly to dig up. Mr. LaBarre stated that an above-the-water line with visual discharge would be approved by DEP and a better solution. Mr. Bahnick stated that 2 permits will be required to do the work in the Spring. The consensus of the Council is to have VanCleeef Engineering price a non-permeable repair using a ditch liner option for their consideration as a permanent repair to be completed in the Spring.

President Prator invited Ryan McGowan, Fidelity Bank to attend the meeting to discuss some finance options if needed. Mr. McGowan introduced himself and provided Council with some basic information for their consideration; he advised that they need 45-60 days to get the advertisement, resolution and loan documents completed for loan approval. Mr. McGowan left at 7:28 P.M.

Mr. Bahnick provided council with a drawing which he reviewed with them explaining several options for them to consider. Once Council has decided; they want Amy Bellanca to review the proposed permanent repair and advise if it acceptable. Mr. Bahnick reported that there is \$70,000.00 left over from the grant for the screens that could possibly be requested to use for this repair; if the money is used to order another set of membrane screens it is \$95,000.00.

Resolution #2025-__: A Resolution of the Borough of Portland Ratifying Emergency Procurement- not considered at this time.

Sewer Manholes on upper end of State Street –no update.

Streets Committee:

Garage ceiling in house estimated materials - \$2,113.00-pending

Legal: none

Subdivision and Land Development (SALDO):

RPL East, LLC Proposed Subdivision Plan -current deadline April 1, 2026.

RPL East, LLC Proposed Planned Industrial Park Plan-current deadline April 1, 2026.

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Zoning, Building and Property Maintenance:

Municipal Building Ramp Replacement – no update
Slate Hills Enterprise (SHE) – no update

Portland Borough Authority: none

Fire, Safety, Police:

Chief Potter advised that Police Chief Pysher and Fire Chief Potter will be working together to do radio upgrades; the County is changing over so the upgrades are necessary. The Police and Fire Departments will apply jointly for LSA Grants. The Fire Department has applied with 7 other departments in Slate Belt grant application that they are hoping to get \$150,000.00; would need approximately \$400,000 to finish their upgrades and Police would need approximately \$80,000.00 to do their upgrades. Chief Potter advised that new portables are 800 megahertz and will cost approximately \$500,000.00. Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised they could also apply for a county grant.

Mayor's Report: none

Ordinance Committee: none

Portland Community Events Committee: none

COG: none

Community Development & Grant Committee:

Post Foundation Grant Generator-no update

Sanitation Committee:

Mark Bahnick left at 8:00 PM.

Budget, Finance, Insurance & Cable TV Contract:

Plan Slate Belt:

President Prator advised that Plan Slate Belt is requesting signatures on the Professional Services Agreement and Agreement to Pay Municipal Contributions. The documents will be provided for Council to review and discuss at the January 5, 2026, Council Meeting. Plan Slate Belt will have their kickoff meeting on January 8, 2026. Bangor will host the Grant and Portland will reimburse Bangor; Portland's portion is \$2,531.00 with a payment each year for 4 years (\$632.75 each year). Councilmember Stephanie Steele will forward the documents to Solicitor Gaul for review.

Slate Belt Rising: none

Personnel Committee – none

Old Business:

Public Restroom Signage- no update
Trailer for speed signs – no update
Park & Ride tree removal – no update

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New Business:

Vinyl Graphics for new vehicles -Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised she emailed for some information.

Public Comment Non-Agenda:

Fire Chief James Potter advised that the Fire Company may need to get \$10,000.00 from Fire Tax Account in January to help pay for their insurance; Chief Potter will send a letter to the Borough to request the funds if needed.

Mr. LaBarre stated that the Borough has lost a month of work time on the effluent line and the VanCleeef bill should be negotiated; President Prator will contact Mr. Bahnick. Councilmember Stephanie Steele stated she has asked FLB for some clarification if an RFP can be sent out.

Chief Potter stated his Portland Borough Authority term expires on December 31, 2025, and the meeting to reappoint is scheduled for January 5, 2026; he will not be able to vote on any matters during this period. President Prator and Councilmember Stephanie Steele advised that the solicitor has stated that the appointments carry through until the reorganizational meeting. President Prator asked if Chief Potter would like a motion tonight to extend his term.

A motion was made by Councilmember Lisa Prator to reappoint James Potter to the Portland Borough Authority for a 5-year term (1/1/2026-12/31/2030); seconded by Councilmember Bruce Cialfi. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.

Executive Session: none

A motion was made by Councilmember Karen Pfeiffer to adjourn the meeting at 8:11 P.M., seconded by Councilmember Lisa Prator. Vote 6-0-0; Motion Carried.

**Reminder: Next meetings: Monday, December 22, 2025
 Monday, January 5, 2026, Reorganizational and Regular Meeting**

Respectfully Submitted,



Lori Sliker, Borough Secretary

